

## **Bible study for this week** 4/16/12~4/22/12

**\*April 16 (Monday), 2012** {[2 Corinthians 4:1~11](#)} Key: We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)) “**The Treasure And The Pots**” Bible In One Year: [1 Samuel 30~31](#); [Luke 13:23~35](#)

It has been said that the Roman Empire ran on olive oil. It was used in cooking, bathing, medicine, ceremonies, lamps, and cosmetics. For decades, olive oil from southern Spain was shipped to Rome in large clay jugs called amphorae. Those jugs, not worth sending back, were discarded in a growing heap of broken shards known as Monte Testaccio. The fragments of an estimated 25 million amphorae created that man-made hill, which stands today on the bank of the Tiber River in Rome. In the ancient world, the value of those pots was not their beauty but their contents.

Because of this, the first-century followers of Christ would have clearly understood Paul's illustration of the life of Jesus in every believer. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” ([2 Cor. 4:7](#)).

Our bodies, like amphorae, are temporary, fragile, and expendable. In our modern world that highly values outward beauty, we would be wise to remember that our greatest treasure is the life of Jesus within us. By God's grace and power, may we live so that others can see Christ in us.

We are just the clay pots. Jesus is the true treasure within us.

*Meditate:* Although my outward shell decays, I'm inwardly renewed each day, Because the life and power of Christ indwells this fragile jar of clay.

*Aphorism:* Christ is seen most clearly when we remain in the background.

**\*April 17 (Tuesday), 2012** {[1 Corinthians 13](#)} Key: [Love] does not seek its own. ([1 Corinthians 13](#)) “**Helping Love Grow**” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 1~2](#); [Luke 14:1~24](#)

A young man told his father, “Dad, I'm going to get married.” “How do you know you're ready to get married, Ron?” asked the father. “Are you in love?” “I sure am!” he replied. The father then asked, “Ron, how do you know you're in love?” “Last night as I was kissing my girlfriend goodnight, her dog bit me and I didn't feel the pain until I got home!”

Ron has got that loving feeling, but he has a lot of growing to do. Vernon Grounds, a former writer for *Bible Study*, who has been married for more than 70 years, shares these points about how to grow in love:

*Ponder God's love in Christ.* Take time to reflect on how He gave His life for you. Read about Him in the Gospels, and thank Him.

*Pray for the love of God.* Ask Him to give you an understanding of His love and to teach you how to live that out in your relationships with your spouse and others (1 Cor. 13).

*Practice the love of God. Give of yourself.* A newlywed told me he thinks love is practical. He said, “My responsibility is to make life easier for my spouse.” The other, tougher side of love is to challenge each other to act in godly ways.

Love will grow when we ponder love, pray for love, and practice love.

*Meditate:* This is my prayer, kind Father, So direct me from above That I may live a life for You And reflect my Savior's love.

*Aphorism:* As Christ's love grows in us, His love flows from us.

**\*April 18 (Wednesday), 2012** {[1 Timothy 1:18~20](#)} Key: Wage the good warfare, having

faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, . . . have suffered shipwreck.(1 [Tim. 1:18~19](#))“A Wrong Reading”Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 3~5](#); [Luke 14:25~35](#)

William Scoresby was a British seafaring explorer in the 19th century who responded to God’s call to the ministry. An interest in the workings of navigational compasses stayed with him during his work as a clergyman. His research led to the discovery that all newly built iron ships had their own magnetic influence on compasses. This influence would change at sea for various reasons—leading crews to read the compass incorrectly. Often this led to disaster.

There is a striking parallel between the misread compass and false biblical teaching. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul warned against “fables and endless genealogies” (v.4)—~ man-made changes in the doctrines of God’s Word. People who teach false doctrines “have suffered shipwreck,” Paul concludes (v.19). Two people who opposed the Word of God by placing false teaching in its place, and who thus faced spiritual shipwreck, were Alexander and Hymenaeus (v.20).

Biblical truth is being questioned and in some cases even replaced in the church today. Our opinions must never replace the truth of God’s Word. The Bible, not man’s erroneous opinions about it, is the ultimate guide for our conscience in navigating life’s changing seas. Beware of wrong readings.

*Meditate:* God’s words of pure, eternal truth Shall yet unshaken stay, When all that man has thought or planned, Like chaff has passed away.

*Aphorism:*The first point of wisdom is to know the truth; the second, to discern what is false.

\*April19(Thursday),2012{ [Isaiah 50:4~5](#)}Key: Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. (Matthew 10:27)“The Secret Chamber”Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 6~8](#); [Luke 15:1~10](#)

People have some needs that are excruciatingly deep. Poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote, “Never morning wore to evening, but some heart did break.”

We find ourselves in conversation at times with heartbroken friends and may feel at an utter loss to know what to say. How can we “speak a word in season to him who is weary,” as it says in [Isaiah 50:4](#)?

Telling people what human teachers have taught us may have some impact on them. But the most helpful or persuasive words are spoken by those who are taught by the Lord Himself.

That’s why it’s essential for us to sit at Jesus’ feet and learn from Him. The more we receive from Him, the more we have to give to others. George MacDonald pictures this time with the Lord as having “a chamber in God Himself.” He continues: “Out of [that] chamber . . . man has to bring revelation and strength for his brethren. This is that for which he was made.”

It’s through our thoughtful and prayerful Bible study, reading, and quiet meditation that God speaks to our hearts. He gives us “the tongue of the learned” ([Isa. 50:4](#)) so that we have something to share with those who are in the depths of despair.

*Meditate:*The comfort God has given us He wants us all to share With others who, with broken hearts, Are caught in deep despair.

*Aphorism:*Listen to God’s heart, then speak from your heart to others.

\*April20(Friday),2012{[Matthew 23:1~13](#)}Key: Whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

[\(Matthew 23:3\)](#)“**Poor Examples**”Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 9~11](#); [Luke 15:11~32](#)

A woman in Oregon was caught driving 103 miles per hour with her 10-year-old grandson in the car. When she was stopped by the police, she told them that she was only trying to teach him never to drive that fast. I suppose she wanted him to do as she said, not as she did.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law seemed to have a similar problem. Jesus had a scathing assessment of them: They were spiritually bankrupt. He held these two groups directly responsible for this sad spiritual condition. As the successors of the lawgiver Moses, they were responsible for expounding the law so that people would walk in God’s ways and have a genuine and vibrant relationship with the Lord ([Deut. 10:12~13](#)). But their personal interpretation and application of the law became more important than God’s law. They did not practice what they preached. What they did observe was done not to bring glory to God but to honor themselves. Jesus exposed who they were—image managers, posers, and hypocrites.

The test of the effectiveness of following Jesus is not just in what we say but in how we live. Are we telling others God’s Word and doing what it says? Let’s model by words and actions what it means to follow Him.

*Meditate:* Christians, remember you bear His dear name, Your lives are for others to view; You are living examples—men praise you or blame, And measure your Savior by you.

*Aphorism:*A good example preaches a powerful sermon.

\***April 21 (Saturday), 2012**{ [Ephesians 2:1~10](#)}Key: By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works. ([Ephesians 2:8~9](#))“**False Hope**”Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 12~13](#); [Luke 16](#)

The name of a pretty Bavarian town in Germany shares the name of a place of horror—Dachau. A museum on the grounds of this infamous Nazi concentration camp attracts many World War II history buffs.

As you look around, it would be hard to miss the misleading words welded to an iron gate: *Arbeit Macht Frei*. This phrase—Work Makes You Free—was just a cruel lie to give false hope to those who entered this place of death.

Many people today have false hope that they can earn a place in heaven by working at being good or by doing good things. God’s standard of perfection, however, requires a totally sinless life. There’s no way any of us can ever be “good enough.” It is only through the sacrifice of the sinless Savior that we are made righteous. God made Jesus “who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)). Eternal life is given because of God’s gift of grace—not because of our good works ([Eph. 2:8~9](#)).

Don’t let Satan trick you by giving you false hope that your good works will save you. It is only through Jesus’ work on the cross that you can have real freedom.

*Meditate:* Accept the teaching of the world And hopeless you will be, But trust in God’s eternal plan If you want life that’s free.

*Aphorism:*We are not saved by good works, but by God’s work.

\***April 22 (Sunday), 2012**{ [Romans 3:10~22](#)}Key: There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. ([Luke 15:10](#))“The Rescue Business”Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 14~15](#); [Luke 17:1~19](#)

A friend recalls: Living in Colorado, I climb mountains. On summer weekends, I see casual hikers who have no idea what they are doing. In sandals, shorts, and T-shirts, carrying a single container of water, they start up a trail at mid-morning. They have no map, no compass, and no rain gear.

My neighbor, who volunteers for Alpine Rescue, has told me stories of tourists rescued from certain death after wandering off a trail. Regardless of the circumstances, Alpine Rescue always responds to a call for help. Not once have they lectured a hapless tourist, “Well, since you ignored the rules of the wilderness, you’ll just have to bear the consequences.” Their mission is rescue. They pursue every needy hiker, no matter how undeserving.

The central message of the Bible is one of rescue. Paul points out that none of us “deserve” God’s mercy and none of us can save ourselves. Like a stranded hiker, all we can do is call for help. Quoting the psalmist, he says, “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God” ([Rom. 3:10~11](#); [Ps. 14:1~3](#)).

The good news of the gospel is that in spite of our state, God seeks after us and responds to every plea for help. You might say that God is in the rescue business.

*Meditate:* Thinking It Over What keeps you from calling out to God for spiritual rescue? Your pride? Do you fear that you are too bad for God’s grace? What does [Romans 3:23~26](#) say?

*Aphorism:* The heart of repentance is turning from sin and toward God.